

Annual Update – April 12, 2011

Introduction:

In June of 2010, the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the Economic Strategic Development Plan. This plan is the result of input from surveys, individual conversations with businesses and residents, focus groups, more than 45 meetings with civic, social and governmental organizations coupled with analysis of national, statewide and regional economic conditions and competition. This document restates our mission and philosophy and reports progress on the strategic goals.

Our Mission:

- Retain and assist Sumter County businesses, improve their success and encourage their expansion.
- Expand Sumter employment opportunities by attracting new, high-quality, diversified businesses that offer “living wage” jobs
- Energize the Sumter County business climate while preserving the county’s quality of life.
- Promote awareness of Sumter County as a desirable and convenient location for doing business.
- Provide timely and efficient support to Sumter County businesses, public organizations, civic and business associations and the educational system, with a “Team Sumter” spirit.
- Increase availability of a well-trained and productive workforce to assure a vital and diversified Sumter economy.
- Communicate Sumter County business and services information in all available ways

Our Philosophy:

We support Sumter County’s entrepreneurial spirit.

We believe the Sumter County entrepreneurial spirit makes jobs for others, creates stability and wealth for our families, our communities and our country.

We celebrate the values of Sumter County’s entrepreneurial spirit, pursuing dreams, seizing opportunities and taking responsibility for our own destiny.

We build the strongest business climate through superior education and training, savvy outreach marketing and sensible recruitment of new and productive businesses. Thus, Sumter County entrepreneurs help themselves while also helping others.

We salute Sumter County entrepreneurs who mentor other aspiring individuals and give back to their community with their time, resources and support.

We believe that the ideas and experience stories of Sumter County entrepreneurs challenge others, enhance the community and offer examples of what can be accomplished when individuals work together to build countywide success.

Our Strategic Goals:

Become a National Model for Healthcare Research/Service Delivery to Senior Adults

- Directly assisted the Central Florida Health Alliance in creating new partnerships for education, research and testing with Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, the University of South Florida and the just beginning development of a new partnership with the University of Central Florida.

Become an Agricultural Business and Research Cluster

- Created partnership with Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, which includes technical, support and research elements culminating in a joint plan to build collateral agricultural businesses complementary to the expansion of Central Beef.
- Assisted in the beginning stages of the creation and start-up of the countywide Agricultural Alliance which will, for the first time, unify all of the major agricultural sub-units throughout Sumter County. This major step will provide direct economic assistance to the 800 ranchers and farmers in the County.
- Helped to initiate, and are now serving on, the "Sumter Scenic Heritage Byway" committee.

Expand Existing Business

- **Central Beef:** assisted the pre-construction activities to increase capacity by 25%. This partnership includes solving issues of zoning, water and sewer utilization, and financing (including the Industrial Development Authority approval of a \$10 million tax-free bond issue). This expansion will not only include additional employment of between 20 and 40 workers, but will also introduce Florida-based processing of "fat cattle". The addition of fat cattle processing within the state of Florida will have major economic impact on cattle ranchers throughout the state and specifically offer Sumter ranchers another viable product line.
- **Outokumpu:** assisted the flexibility of current production by the addition of a \$14 million mechanical press (scheduled for delivery and installation this quarter) that will add the production of 3 inch thickness stainless steel pipe to their international product line. Also provided technical/zoning information to their purchase of 33 additional acres for potential long-term expansion.
- **Sales Corp of Florida:** Coordinated technical assistance of an electrical engineer specializing in logic controlled machining equipment. Also coordinated resources for technical training services.
- Established relationships and brokered numerous meetings with SCORE, SBA, financial institutions, and potential investors, in order to provide technical assistance and advice to numerous local businesses.
- Received and responded to more than 225 local calls for assistance, information and resource identification by Sumter County businesses.

- Engaged with the following businesses in the course of promoting business growth and expansion:
 - The Villages
 - Central Florida Health Alliance
 - Central Beef
 - Colliers International
 - Agricultural Alliance
 - Lee Capital
 - Landstone
 - Medallion Homes
 - Oxford Land Company
 - United Agricultural Services
 - SECO
 - CSX
 - Webster Cattle Market
 - Pat the Plumber/Ugreen
 - ACMS
- Provided vital information to local businesses on State of Florida business incentive programs.

Recruit New Business

- Created and implemented Sumter CEOs, a group of volunteer senior business leaders using their contacts throughout the country to assist in recruiting new businesses to the County.
- Served as executive committee member for regional outreach survey "Open for Business" which aims to identify and reduce any existing obstacles for business expansion or recruitment.
- Drafted first Sumter County Business Incentive Program.
- Assembled demographic and statistical data to create discreet packages of information for distribution, in effect standardizing the quality and branding of all materials requests.
- Conducted cooperative outreach programs with Sumter County Chamber of Commerce
- Developed and implemented a fully integrated database and CRM system to track and follow business leads.
- Adopted legal "privacy protection" policy for new business leads.
- Engaged on an ongoing basis with the following businesses and/or their representatives in the course of recruiting new businesses to the County:
 - Genesis Industries
 - Rhyno Energy
 - National Solar
 - Memco

- The Jackson Laboratory
 - Shapiro-Pertnoy
 - Tom and Jerry's Airboat Rides
 - Peninsula Composting
 - US Goat Meat Supply
- Established professional relationships and identity with Enterprise Florida, the state agency for business recruitment and international trade.
- Partnered with Ministerial Alliance to communicate directly with job providers and job seekers.

Build a Unified Tourism Strategy

- Awarded tourism plan development contract and are currently in the fifth and final month of producing the first Sumter County Tourism Plan. This Plan contains input from industry stakeholders, the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners, the Tourist Development Council, a survey of stakeholders and a competitive analysis that integrates fully with the County's economic development plan.

Build and Brand a Regional Hub for Transportation

- Met with CSX and several local industries to examine and update potential for multimodal site development.
- Marketing cooperatively with the City of Wildwood through the creation of the business brochure identifying them as the regional transportation hub.
- Serve as member of the Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council.

Incubators/Start Up Support

- Examined with Superintendent of Schools the potential reuse of the Wildwood School as a site for medical education, adult education, advanced vocational training, post secondary education, small business education, agricultural education and small business incubation.
- Developed property packages for promoting the site and the concept to potential partners and investors.
- Negotiated and contracted for the first major 10 week business startup educational program "The Entrepreneurial Academy" conducted through Lake Sumter Community College to begin in Sumter County. June 14.
- Opened partnership discussions with FAMU to use an existing school facility for offering medical, business and entrepreneurial training/degrees.

Marketing Outreach

- Built the database of existing business contacts from 35 to 2155.
- Wrote, created and distributed a monthly newsletter (15 to-date).
- Wrote, created and distributed multiple business alerts (17 to-date).
- Wrote and distributed multiple business press releases, with follow-up discussions.
- Appeared on two statewide and three regional television shows showcasing the County.
- Added Sumter CEO Program logo/branding, instructional materials, promotional handouts, developed web presence including landing page, secure "member" directory and online referral submission form.
- Performed planning, development and promotion of Business Summit including newspaper ads, promotional flyers, banners/signage, web page and online registration form.
- Developed and promoted 2011 Sumter County Business Survey including branded email/alert, survey graphics, web page and the soon-to-be-released results report.
- Updated and enhanced website content on a monthly basis.
- Designed and developed "site seeker" website of available commercial properties in Sumter County and are currently in beta testing stage of adding manual property entry functionality.
- In last phase of the evaluation of cost/benefit of beginning regional radio show to enhance existing businesses, recruit new businesses and provide technical and educational assistance.
- Designed and produced "Smart, Shovel-Ready Bushnell Business Brochure"
- Designed and produced "Poised for Growth Wildwood Business brochure".
- Designed and implemented "Top 10" business reasons to relocate to Sumter County
- Designed and provided marketing materials on Sumter County to Enterprise Florida for their website, Progress Energy for their corporate newsletter, and other electronic and print outreach.
- Graduate, Leadership Sumter: Chamber of Commerce business education and leadership program.
- Participated in Enterprise Florida, regional and statewide conferences on business development, rural development strategies and trade opportunities.
- Presented strategic plan to community groups to promote business, the county and SCED.
- Submitted magazine story summaries on top 10 businesses for regional style magazine.
- Submitted business program information to Florida Trend and Tampa & Orlando Business Journals.

Education

- Serve as board member and on several board committees of Workforce Central Florida, which is the primary state agency designed to prepare and place job seekers and to assist and support job providers.
- Serve as board member of the Business Resource Center of the Lake Sumter Community College which is the primary post-secondary students and business educational program.
- Serve as board member of the Sumter County School System Business Advisory Council.
- Implemented first instructional meeting from Enterprise Florida on "International Trade Opportunities"
- In process of conducting second Annual Business Summit scheduled for April 27.
- Initiated planning progress to offer post secondary medical and business training plus. degree/certificate programs with FAMU.
- Partnered with WCF to begin mobile employer and employee training beginning May 5